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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - Iraq - 'Oil For Food' Scandal  
Syria - Questions on Suicide of Interior Minister  
GWOT - Rendition and Legislation on Torture European Issues  
PARIS - Thursday, October 13, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

Iraq - 'Oil For Food' Scandal  
Syria - Questions on Suicide of Interior Minister  
GWOT - Rendition and Legislation on Torture  
European Issues

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

Although no editorial commentary is devoted to the alleged suicide of Syria's Interior Minister Kanaan, several reports raise questions about his involvement in the assassination of Rafic Hariri as well as about the future of the Syrian regime. Le Figaro headlines "An Affair of State that Weakens Syrian Regime." (See Part C) Several other stories make today's front pages, including rescue efforts in Pakistan after the earthquake, with La Croix headlining: "Muzaffarabad Disorganized and Suffering." Inside, the report says: "Washington has allotted 41 billion dollars in aid to Pakistan, its great ally in the fight against terrorism." Liberation briefly reports: "Secretary Rice made a short stop in Islamabad to personally express the feelings of support from the American people to the Pakistani President."

The 'oil for food' scandal and the arrest of a former French diplomat is a major editorial story. For Le Monde "France's Image Is Tarnished," while La Croix concludes that 'corruption is a weapon of mass destruction.' (See Part C) La Croix interviews former U.S. diplomat Peter Galbraith about the Iraqi Constitution: "The country is already essentially divided. The question is whether it will be broken up by violence and chaos or by peaceful means. The primary objective is to minimize the risks of a civil war. The Constitution provides the framework for minimizing the potential for rift between the three emerging entities. Iraq should never have been a unitary state. Federalism offers the framework for a solution to the fact that Baghdad does not control Basra, all the while limiting Iran's influence."

Liberation carries an editorial commentary titled "Bush Decrees the Need for Torture." (See part C)

In Le Figaro an op-ed by columnist Alexandre Adler invites France to make military and strategic cooperation overtures to Great Britain in order to fold the UK into the Paris-Berlin tandem. (See Part C) Le Figaro carries a full page on European issues, including a report by two retired NATO generals who criticize Europe's lack of "political will" in assigning budgets and means to Europe's defense: "The alarm has been raised: if Europe continues along the same lines in matters of security, it is heading towards a catastrophe." According to the two NATO generals, Europe will not even be in a position to protect its own interests, including protecting itself from terrorist threats."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

Iraq - 'Oil For Food' Scandal

"The Image of France"  
Left-of-center Le Monde in its editorial (10/13): "The 'oil for food' scandal is seriously tarnishing France's diplomacy. The more lenient will wonder about the dangers of France's pro-Arab policy and its blindness. The revelations of the investigation are smearing France's diplomacy at the highest level. Washington was behind the original disclosures. This was part of its merciless battle with France, while France brandished the banner of multilateralism and opposed President Bush's war plans for Iraq. This scandal also gave Washington an opportunity to broaden its campaign against the UN, an organization that has never been sufficiently effective in the eyes of the U.S. While all of this is true, there is no excuse for corruption, if corruption is proven, on the part of French diplomats."

#### "The Scandal of Corruption"

Dominique Quinio in Catholic La Croix (10/13): "The 'oil for food' scandal is smearing the UN., casts doubts on France's diplomacy and greatly tarnishes its previous flamboyant anti-war stance. How can anyone believe in France's sincerity in the attitude it adopted about Iraq, if dangerous liaisons were indeed established with a dictator and corruption is proven? This doubt benefits neither the UN, nor multilateralism nor peace. Corruption is a weapon of mass destruction."

#### Syria - Questions on Suicide of Interior Minister

##### "An Affair of State"

Pierre Prier in right-of-center Le Figaro (10/13): "Coincidentally, the disappearance of Kanaan is happening just when new pressure is mounting against the Syrian regime. Syria is the target of repeated admonitions from the U.S. to stop supporting Iraqi insurgents. Pushed against the wall, the Syrian regime may be tempted to save itself by eliminating the more cumbersome of its elements. The regime's opponents, who are prohibited from assembling in Damascus, are holding open meetings in Paris and Washington. It is alleged that they are in close contact with the Assad family. There are also allegations that a close advisor of Bachar el-Assad has made contact with the U.S. and the Syrian arm of the Muslim Brotherhood exiled in London. The suspicious death of Kanaan is one more mystery to add to these cloak and dagger negotiations."

#### GWOT - Rendition and Legislation on Torture

##### "Bush Decrees the Need for Torture"

Jacques Amalric in left-of-center Liberation (10/13): "President Bush believes that what he calls a 'war' against terrorism authorizes all sorts of practices, including the use of torture. The Senate vote is a slap in the face for the White House. President Bush . is ready to use his veto to allow the use of torture outside the U.S. This is a first in contemporary history; all the while dictatorships, including the worst of them, claim they do not resort to torture."

#### European Issues

##### "Paris - Berlin- London: A Mnage a Trois"

Alexandre Adler in right-of-center Le Figaro (10/13): "In the coming months, France has great opportunities to resurrect the European process. A thirty-three-member Europe would once and for all put to rest the original Europe, eager for power and competition with the U.S., which was the French founding fathers' ambition. But a thirty-three-member Europe is too much. A central core needs to be erected in Brussels. This is where France can play a major role: this new architecture cannot leave any of the major parties on the outside. If France were able to offer Great Britain a privileged military and strategic partnership, with constant consultations on issues ranging from the nuclear to the Middle East, then and only then would London be in a position to see the re-enforcement of the Franco-German tandem as something other than the death of its own ambitions. In other words, for Paris, the road to Berlin passes strategically through a generous arrangement with the still ill-defined ambitions of Great Britain, which, like France, is also searching for itself." STAPLETON